



NEWS FROM THE OFFICE OF
Senator Henry Stern
REPRESENTING SENATE DISTRICT 27



**Stern's "Never Again Education Act,"
Unanimously Approved by Senate Education Committee**

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SACRAMENTO – Moving beyond remembrance to action is one of the goals of Senator Henry Stern's (D-Los Angeles) SB 693, the Never Again Education Act of 2021, which cleared the Senate Education Committee today on a unanimous 7-0 vote.

"As our collective memory fades and we lose the last generation of survivors, we must redouble our commitment to educate the next generation and refuse to slip into the same apathy and ignorance that allows hatred to take root," said Stern.

SB 693 would help address the growing knowledge gap among young Americans about the Holocaust and other recent genocides by offering new teaching methods and enhanced resources for teachers and students, to remedy a recent rise in anti-Semitism, Holocaust denial and other acts of hatred.

"On January 6, I sat with my father-in-law, who survived Auschwitz as a teenage boy, watching in horror as domestic terrorists stormed the U.S. Capitol. One of the men tearing down the Speaker's door wore a 'Camp Auschwitz' sweatshirt," continued Stern. "A greater horror set in at that moment – that thousands of young people in our community, and across our state and nation, watching this siege unfold, would have no idea what that sweatshirt meant, what Auschwitz was, and that hatred has a history."

The Anti-Defamation League's (ADL) most recent "Audit of Antisemitic Incidents in the United States" recorded more than 2,100 acts of assault, vandalism, harassment and murder targeting Jewish Americans, the highest level of antisemitic violence ever recorded by ADL.

A nationwide survey last year of millennial and Generation Z Americans, showed a "worrying lack of basic Holocaust knowledge": 63% of those surveyed did not know that 6 million Jews were murdered in the Holocaust, and 66% of millennials could not identify the significance of Auschwitz.

"ADL is proud to support SB 693 for a multitude of reasons, among them that Holocaust education helps students learn to examine and counter the effects of stereotyping, indifference, and bigotry," said ADL regional director, Nancy Appel. "Echoes & Reflections, a partnership among Yad Vashem, ADL, and the USC Shoah Foundation to develop Holocaust curricula, released a survey in 2020 showing that high school students who studied the Holocaust have more pluralistic attitudes; are more willing to challenge intolerant behavior in others; and have a greater sense of social responsibility and civic efficacy. In today's climate of heightened antisemitism, anti-Asian scapegoating, and systemic racism, nurturing these values in young people could not be more important."

SB 693 (Stern) establishes the Governor's Council on Genocide and Holocaust Education. It would assemble leading experts on teaching about genocide, and the Holocaust in particular, to help students confront this complex subject matter and embrace the importance of diversity, human rights, and the roles and responsibilities of citizens in democratic societies to combat misinformation, indifference, and discrimination.

“Despite herculean efforts by educational institutions, like the Museum of Tolerance, to teach the Holocaust, there so much more to be done reach tens of thousands of California's students each year,” begins Rabbi Meyer May of the Simon Wiesenthal Center. “The Holocaust was the watershed event of the 20th century, yet, as the memory of its obscenity fades together with the courageous survivors, the ignorance and of so many citizens and young people of its horrors is astounding. Almost half of all American and almost two thirds of our millennials have no idea what took place at Auschwitz and the other death camps. This failing can only be addressed by a systemic approach to Holocaust education as called for by SB 693.”

SB 693 is a priority bill for the Jewish Caucus. It is also supported by the Armenian Assembly of America, Armenian Film Foundation, Comfort Women Action for Redress and Education, Comfort Women Justice Coalition, Discovery Education, Hadassah, Jewish Family and Children's Services – Holocaust Center, Israeli-American Civic Action Network, National Association for Armenian Studies & Research, Pomegranate Foundation, and the USC Shoah Foundation.

The bill will be heard next in the Senate Appropriations Committee later this month.

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